

PLANNING IN MANISTEE COUNTY

Zach Vega, AICP

Networks Northwest





MANISTEE COUNTY-WIDE PARK & RECREATION PLAN

2022-2026

Manistee County | Arcadia Township | Bear Lake Township | Village of Bear Lake
Brown Township | Cleon Township | Village of Copemish | Dickson Township
Village of Eastlake | Charter Township of Filer | Village of Kaleva | City of Manistee
Manistee Township | Maple Grove Township | Marilla Township | Norman Township
Onekama Township | Village of Onekama | Pleasanton Township
Springdale Township | Stronach Township

Plan Prepared by Networks Northwest

Adopted by local municipalities

Adopted by Manistee County Board of Commissioners



Planning Process

As the 2016-2020 Manistee County-Wide Park & Recreation Plan was the first of its kind in the county, there was a great need for an extensive public input process. Because this had been the first time Manistee planned for parks and recreation in a coordinated and cross-jurisdictional manner, the planning process itself required an in-depth look at what was working well, what needed to be improved and what residents wanted to see for their community in the coming years. Analogous to other planning processes, the successful implementation of a project is often determined by the public's support for it. Therefore, it was critical to understand public sentiment

Aside from the survey, and perhaps most importantly, the planning team organized various public visioning sessions in 2015 to inform Manistee County's first county-wide park and recreation plan. There were nine visioning sessions in total. Three of these were at local area high schools: Manistee High School, Onkama High School and Brethren High School. The intent was to engage area youth to understand their recreational needs, an age group that is often left out of planning processes.

For the wider public, the planning team hosted public input sessions at six different locations. These meeting sites were chosen because they could be easily identified by members

Building Consensus Around Recreation

early in the process to ensure that future park and recreation improvements in Manistee are representative of what people want to see in their community.

This chapter summarizes the public input and planning process that informed the 2016-2020 county-wide plan, as well as the more recent process used to update this information for this 2022-2026 plan. The input process from the previous county-wide plan is described here because the information it produced informed the bulk of this current plan. The 2022-2026 planning process was largely a review and update to the information gathered in 2015.

2016-2020 Public Input Process

The 2016-2020 Manistee County-Wide Park & Recreation Plan was informed by three overarching outreach methods: a county-wide survey, public visioning sessions and stakeholder meetings. The objective in using a variety of outreach methods was to garner sentiments from people representing different geographic locations in the county, people with different recreation interests and people of different age groups.

The survey was well advertised throughout Manistee with the use of traditional and social media, flyers, personalized invitations to stakeholders and public announcements at community events. The online survey was open for three months (May through July) which allowed seasonal residents to participate as well. Paper versions of the survey were available to those who did not have online access. The 1,009 responses gathered from the 2016 survey helped to inform the county-wide goals and objectives found in the previous plan. The most cited improvements and additions to Manistee's inventory of recreation opportunities were trails, sports complexes, the ability to rent canoes and kayaks, climbing walls, an indoor fitness/exercise facility and a nature center. Trail planning has continued to be a focus for community members and local leaders. Chapter 3 discussed this further, including what efforts have been made since 2016.

of the public, they were in relatively close proximity to higher population centers and they were spaced apart enough so that residents throughout the county could attend a session close to their home. These meetings took place at Marilla Township Hall, Stronach Township Hall, Brethren High School, Bear Lake United Methodist Church, Springdale Township Hall and Manistee High School.

All nine public visioning sessions followed a similar format. Participants identified their preferred recreation activities and the locations they most often frequent in Manistee to give the planning team an anecdotal understanding of the county's recreation sites and hubs of activity. This activity then led into a Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities (SWO) discussion. In summary, participants stated that the area's unique and pristine natural resources are its main strength. The main concerns, or weaknesses included a shortage of access points to water resources, shortcomings in regard to trails and the perceived inability for communities to adequately fund and maintain the recreation sites that they own.

Finally, in 2015, the planning team concluded the public planning process through discussions with key stakeholders. These stakeholders included the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the United States Forest Service, Consumers Energy and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy.

Though each group had specific stances on how they perceive recreation within Manistee, all felt it was a worthwhile endeavor to move forward with the collaboration and consensus that had been built through the planning process. One notion that was reiterated in each discussion was to remain transparent and to ensure that each of these groups is included in any initial conversations concerning recreation in which they have a stake and/or own property. In other words, collaboration and open communication should remain a priority.



Manistee County's population has remained steady over the past 10 years and is projected to continue along a similar trajectory through 2025. Shown in Figure 1, Manistee County's population grew from 24,733 in 2010 to 24,960 in 2020. Despite this slight growth, Manistee County is projected to decline in population by 2025 to 24,886 people.

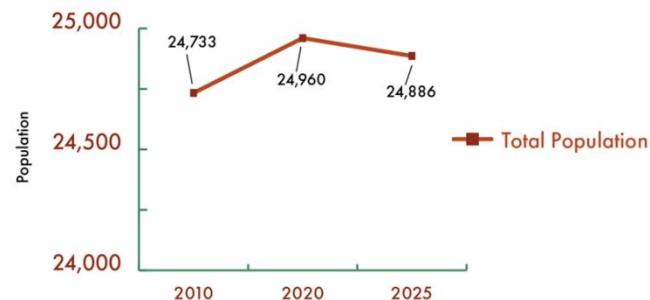
Figure 2 describes the breakdown of three age groups in Manistee. One can see that from 2010 to 2025, the county's median age will increase as the proportion of individuals age 65+ rises. For context, 22.1 percent of Michiganders are age 65+, meaning Manistee County's population is, on average, older than residents from other communities across the state. This provides some planning implications as jurisdictions within Manistee County may decide to shift some recreation programming and infrastructure developments to suit an aging population.

Community Demographics

Breaking down the community's population change further, Figure 4 on page 15 shows trends for each Census Tract in Manistee County to illustrate what areas of the county are gaining and losing residents. One can see that growth in the community has largely occurred in Tracts 4 (Manistee Township), 7 (Filer & Stronach Townships) and 9 (City of Manistee & Manistee Township). However, consistent with population trends for the county as a whole, none of the local jurisdictions have seen a significant change in their population since 2010.

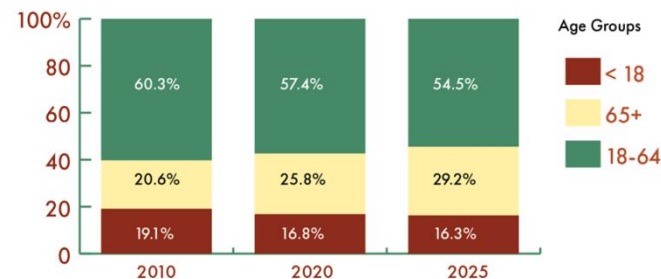
One important factor to consider when planning for parks and recreation is accessibility. Nearly one in five people (18.2%) living in Manistee County lives with at least one form of physical disability (see Figure 3). It is reasonable to assume that this number will go up in tandem with the median age increase. Discussed later in this plan, Manistee County strives to provide recreation opportunities that serve everyone regardless of physical ability. This is one of the key principles guiding the county going forward.

Figure 1. Manistee County Population, 2010-2025



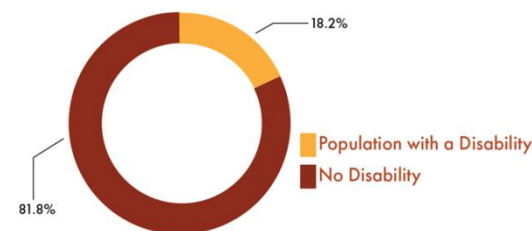
Source: Esri, Business Analyst Online - Community Profile

Figure 2. Population by Age, 2010-2025



Source: Esri, Business Analyst Online - Community Profile

Figure 3. Population with a Disability, 2019



Source: ACS 2019 5-Year Estimates

Figure 7. Which of the following recreation activities do you participate in within Manistee County during the warm-weather months? (Choose all that apply)

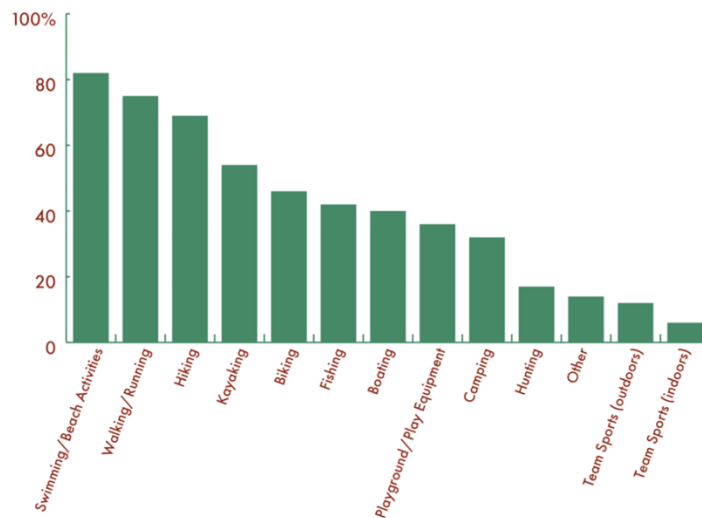


Figure 8. Which of the following recreation activities do you participate in within Manistee County during the winter months? (Choose all that apply)

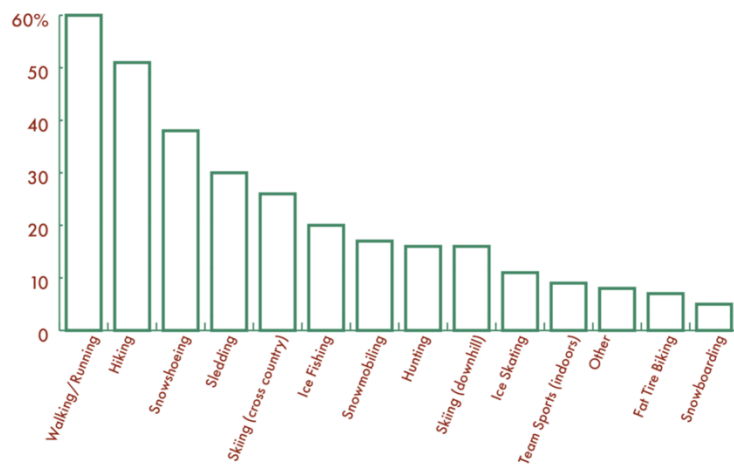


Figure 9. Where do you go in Manistee County to recreate? (Choose all that apply)

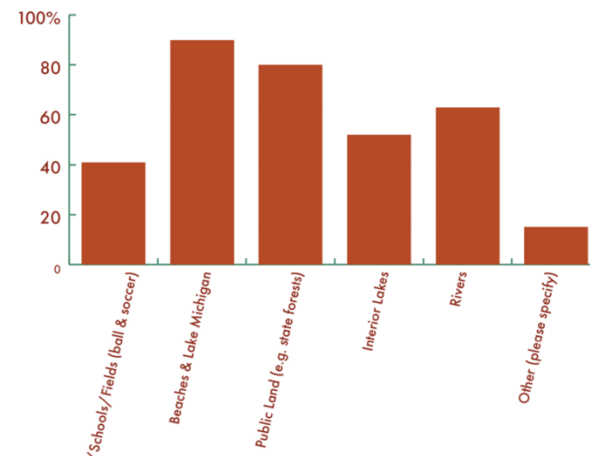


Figure 10. How often do you visit a public park, beach, trail or other recreation site in Manistee County?

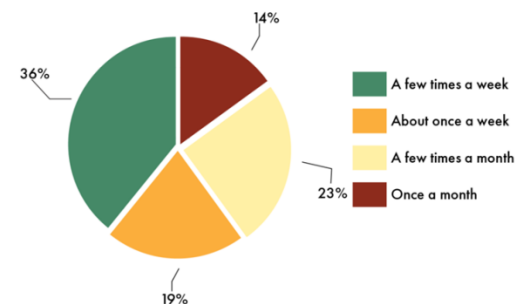
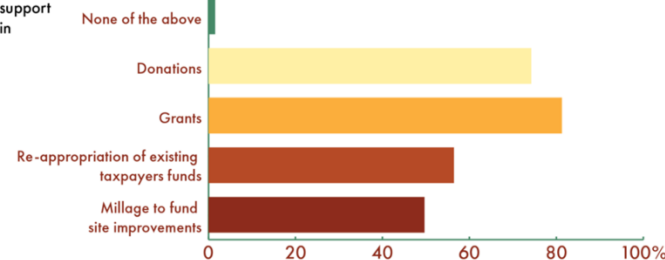


Figure 11. Which recreation funding methods do you support for parks and recreation in Manistee County?





Goal 5: Look for ways to improve collaboration and partnerships to support recreation.

- Meet with the Manistee Recreation Authority, local recreation organizations, educational institutions and the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians to explore ways to increase natural outdoor recreation by offering lessons/programming that teaches kiteboarding, sailing, paddle boarding, fly fishing, and other recreational activities that utilize our natural assets.
- Continue to maintain working relationships and a regular meeting schedule with Consumers Energy, the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, the Department of Natural Resources, US Forest Service, and the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians in order to implement this Recreation Plan.

Goal 6: Develop a county wide, multi-use, trail system that connects communities, natural features and is universally accessible.

- Create a wayfinding plan for the county.
- Coordinate with SMARTrails and the local jurisdictions to implement the Manistee Lake Area Non-motorized Trail Plan, the Railroad Relocation for the Manistee Lake Area Communities Plan and the 2017 Manistee County US-31 Corridor Enhancement Plan.
- Develop trail plans for the identified trail hubs throughout the county.
- Plan a Blue Water trail system with links to neighboring Counties.
- Mark designated trail uses on the county's trails and trailheads.
- Continue to identify trail opportunities that are off road and would be procured by purchasing land, seeking easements, utilizing railroad grades, and/or converting snowmobile trail leases into multi-use easement lease agreements.
- Keep an open line of communication with all of the county's municipalities. Conduct periodic discussions concerning the current status of the recreation plan and ongoing projects.
- Publish, maintain and market ORV, snowmobile and non-motorized trails in Manistee.



Goal 7: Help improve and promote the use of community parks.

- Create opportunities for linkages and connections between the parks.
- Support efforts by communities to implement their park improvement goals.
- Work with the Visitors Bureau and other related organizations to promote recreation sites.

Goal 8: Improve pedestrian and non-motorized travel in Manistee County.

- Support safe crossing points on major roads by working with MDOT, the Manistee County Road Commission and local units of government.
- Support the adoption of Complete Streets resolutions and ordinances at the local level to promote traffic calming measures along state-managed roads.
- Support safe non-motorized travel best practices at the local level.

Goal 9: Plan for the maintenance and funding of recreational facilities.

- Create a county-wide dialogue about the importance of creating a line-item budget for recreation expenditures within an individual community's budget.
- Create a county-wide dialogue about the importance of creating a recreation savings account to save money for the matching funds needed when applying for grants.
- Facilitate a seminar to discuss potential funding sources to implement the Manistee County-Wide Park & Recreation Plan.



Community Description

Arcadia recognizes that quality recreation opportunities help the community to meet the triple-bottom-line of sustainability. Socially, these opportunities promote a unified and healthy populace. This is something the Township has taken a stronger stance on reflected in its more recent adoption of a resolution of support for greater inclusivity. In terms of economic growth, opportunities are centered on utilizing the natural resource assets of the community as recreation avenues and building upon them so that other sectors within the local economy benefit. Environmentally, park and recreation planning can help to showcase the community's natural assets, thereby supporting their stewardship.

Community parks with playground equipment and courts for tennis and basketball can be found within the population center of the unincorporated Village of Arcadia. Access to Arcadia Lake at the Veterans Memorial Park and Marina provides for the County's first Universally Accessible kayak launch at this designated Explore the

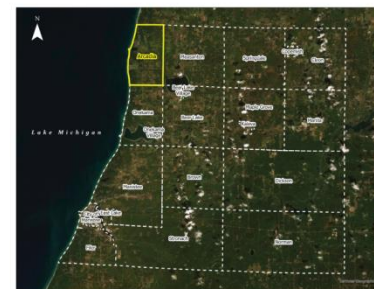
Shores Site.

The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy has land holdings within the Arcadia Marsh, which provides opportunities for hiking, bird-watching and hunting. The Conservancy also has land holdings along the northern boundary of the township which are intersected by trails that can be accessed by trailheads in Benzie County. Localized trail systems on Conservancy lands as well as the on-road facility along a portion of Glovers Lake Road provide localized trails that present opportunities for future connections. Support for establishment of connections to Bear Lake, Pleasanton and Oneskama Townships as well as to Benzie County should remain a focus.

Administrative Structure

Municipality	Arcadia Township
Governing body responsible for recreation planning	Township Board, at the recommendation of the Parks & Recreation Committee
Governing body authorized to commit funds	Township Board
Budget	\$25,000
Sources of funds	General Fund
Volunteers	30-50 volunteers who do maintenance, help with community projects and events, plant flowers, help with beautification efforts
Partnerships and/or collaborative agreements	Encourages recreation programming by the Pleasant Valley Community Center
Contributes to Manistee Recreation Association (MRA)	Yes
Contributes to Paine Aquatic Center	No

A-2



DNR-Awarded Grants

Project #	Applicant	Title	Year	Amount	Status	Description
26-01016	Arcadia Township	Arcadia Township Lake Michigan Park	1977	\$12,966.00	Withdrawn	Develop 1 ac Lake Michigan Park; includes restrooms, picnic shelter, parking area, landscaping
26-01010	Arcadia Township	Arcadia Meeting & Learning Facilities	1978	\$75,000.00	Closed	Develop parking, pier, launch ramp removal, new piling, piers and launch ramp, rip-rap, sidewalk, lighting, utilities, site improvement, landscaping
TF1027	Arcadia Township	Arcadia Township Marina Expansion	1985	\$95,000.00	Closed	Acquisition of 70 acres with 200 feet of Arcadia Lake frontage. The property between the existing marina and Townsville properties.
TF99-127	Arcadia Township	Arcadia South Beach	1999	\$834,759.00	Closed	Acquisition in fee simple of 10 acres for recreation protection and public outdoor recreation. Site includes 1,369 feet of Lake Mi shoreline.
RP11-425	Arcadia Township	Finch Park Improvements	2011	\$11,175.00	Closed	Development included renovation of parking lot and tennis courts.

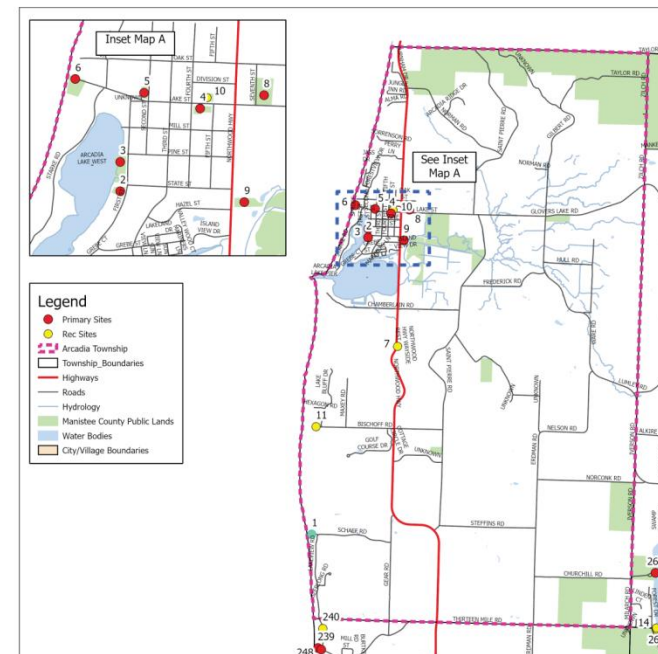
A-3

Recreation Site Inventory

[illegible]

Site Name	Trails (Off-Road)	Bike Lane (Road Shoulder)	Playground Equipment	Tennis/Pickleball Court	Basketball Court
Greebe Park		x			
Pickert Park		x			
Arctadia Beach & Natural Area	x	x			
Pleasant Valley Community Center		x	x	x	x
Veterans Memorial Park & Marina					
Finch Park				x	
Arctadia Marsh Natural Area					
Arctadia Trip Hall					
School Rd Access-MI	x				
N-22 Scenic Overlook					
Buschard Rd Access-MI	x				

A-4



A-5

Implementation of Park & Recreation Plan

- Timelines
- Responsible parties
- Prioritization



Why do we collaborate across jurisdictional lines?

- Cost-sharing, saving
- Reduce redundancies
- Natural features don't stop at municipal boundaries
- People don't stop at municipal boundaries



Land Use Permitting | Opportunity for Collaboration

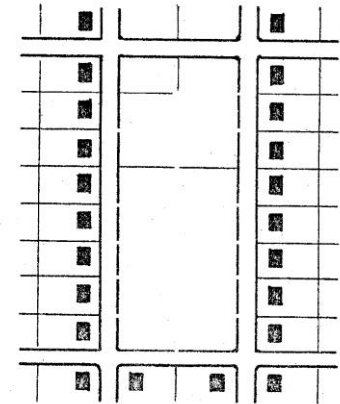
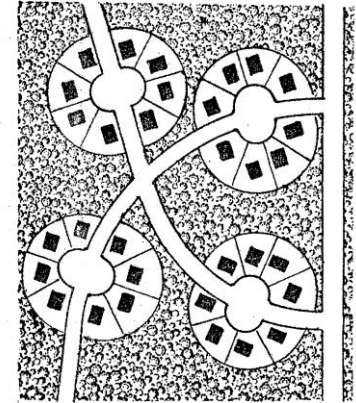
- Developers know what to expect, everywhere
- Permits and other documents are uniform
- Costs reduced
- Administration is easier
- Still allows communities to zone how they want



Master Plan Update | Topics to Consider



Agricultural Preservation



Corridors



Here's what residents said they **WANT** to see in their US 31 corridor...



Image 18: Desired Rural Area Example

In Rural Areas...

- Areas devoted to agricultural crops.
- Natural vegetation lining the road (rather than prescribed landscaping).
- Views of lakes, orchards, and open space.
- Agricultural and residential buildings set back from roadways protecting the view shed.
- Overhead utility lines with lighting affixed to poles.
- Two travel lanes on roadway and at key intersections areas with left turn and right turn deceleration lanes provided to maintain traffic flow.



Image 19: Desired Suburban Area Example

In Suburban Areas...

- Landscaped vegetation along roadway, between parking/building areas and pedestrian walkways.
- Designated pedestrian sidewalk adjacent to roadway.
- Designated bike lane along roadway.
- Signage is placed on monument structures and/or on building;
- Single row of parking allowed in front of building with additional parking on sides or rear.
- Building set at a "zero lot line" allowing for placement up to the right-of-way.
- Two travel lanes with a boulevard for controlled left hand turns and for protection of pedestrians at road crossings.
- Overhead utilities now buried underground.
- Pedestrian level lighting adjacent to walkway.



Image 20: Desired Urban Area Example

In Urban Areas...

- Vegetation along roadway separating pedestrian walkways from roadway.
- Designated pedestrian sidewalk adjacent to roadway.
- Signage is placed on a monument structure and/or on buildings.
- Parking situated along side and rear of building.
- Buildings set at a zero lot line immediately adjacent to roadway.
- Two travel lanes with a center left hand turn lane.
- Overhead utilities now buried underground.
- Pedestrian level lighting adjacent to walkway.

Here's what residents said they **DO NOT** want to see in their US 31 corridor..



Image 21: Undesirable Parking Lot Example

Large, extensive parking in front of buildings without any landscaping



Image 22: Lack of Pathways & Sidewalks

Dirt paths rather than sidewalks



Image 23: Lack of Separation of Sidewalk & Roadway

No landscaping between sidewalks and the road



Image 24: Undesired Roadway Example

Two travel lanes with a center left turn lane and multiple curb cuts



Image 25: Undesired Sign Example

Temporary, pole, and very tall signs



Image 26: Undesired Development Pattern

Views in rural areas disturbed by encroaching development



DRIVE THRU

ALL AMERICAN FOOD
2 HAMBURGERS \$3
DEEP FRIED
MUSHROOMS \$3.89



CHINA
OFFET













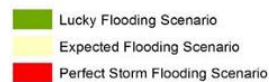
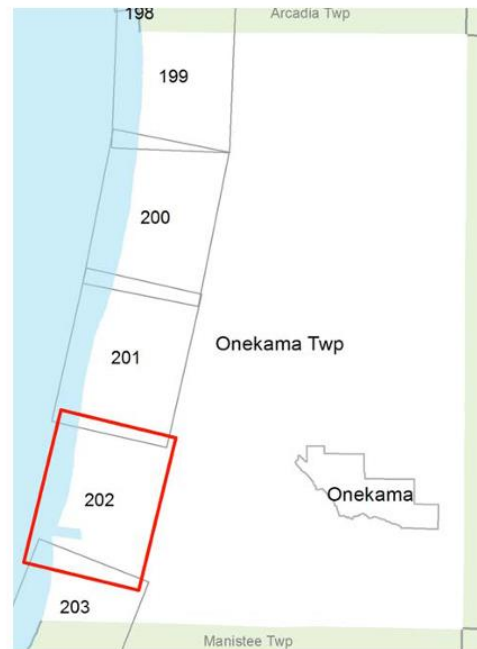




Coastal Resilience

- Coastal options
 - Do nothing
 - Beach re-nourishment
 - Permit seawalls
 - Green infrastructure
 - Plan for abandonment
- There are costs and benefits to all available options. Therefore, you need to have a community discussion on what option to choose.

Coastal Resilience



Septic | Water Quality



Septic | Water Quality

- Septic was never meant as a long-term solution
- We need better data
- We need informed citizens
- How do we know which septic tanks need maintenance?

Local Identity & the Built Environment

- Modern versus traditional design elements
- What makes your place unique?
- What distinguishes your community from everywhere else? (Kaleva does a good job of this with its Finnish history)
- People only attach meaning to a place if there are elements that allow them to do so



The Kaleva

Historical Society



[Home](#) [About Kaleva](#) [Projects & Sites](#) [Historical Archive](#) [Upcoming Events](#) [Local Interests](#)

The Bottle House Museum

In 1941, a unique home was built in Kaleva out of 60,000 glass bottles by John Makinen.

Mr. Makinen owned the local pop bottling factory, and he used chipped or flawed bottles from his pop bottling factory for his house. It was designed with artistic placement of the many different colored bottles and was a tourist draw long before it became a museum.

In 1983, with fund raising efforts by the community, the Kaleva Historical Society was able to purchase the property from the John Makinen family and thus established its new and permanent home. Historic items are faithfully inventoried, preserved and displayed. Over the years, visitors from all over the world come to appreciate the history of the area through these artifacts. The museum is home to many exhibits illustrating the Finnish-American history of the community including businesses, farming, and early settlers.

The Bottle House is listed on the National Historic Register and has been featured in travel publications.



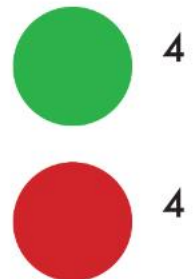
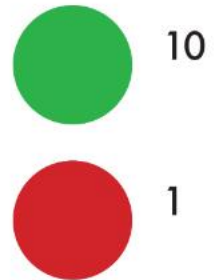
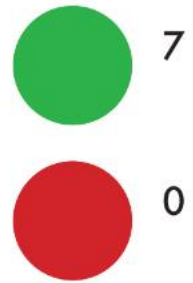
14551 Wuoksi Street
Kaleva MI 49645

Memorial Day Weekend to October

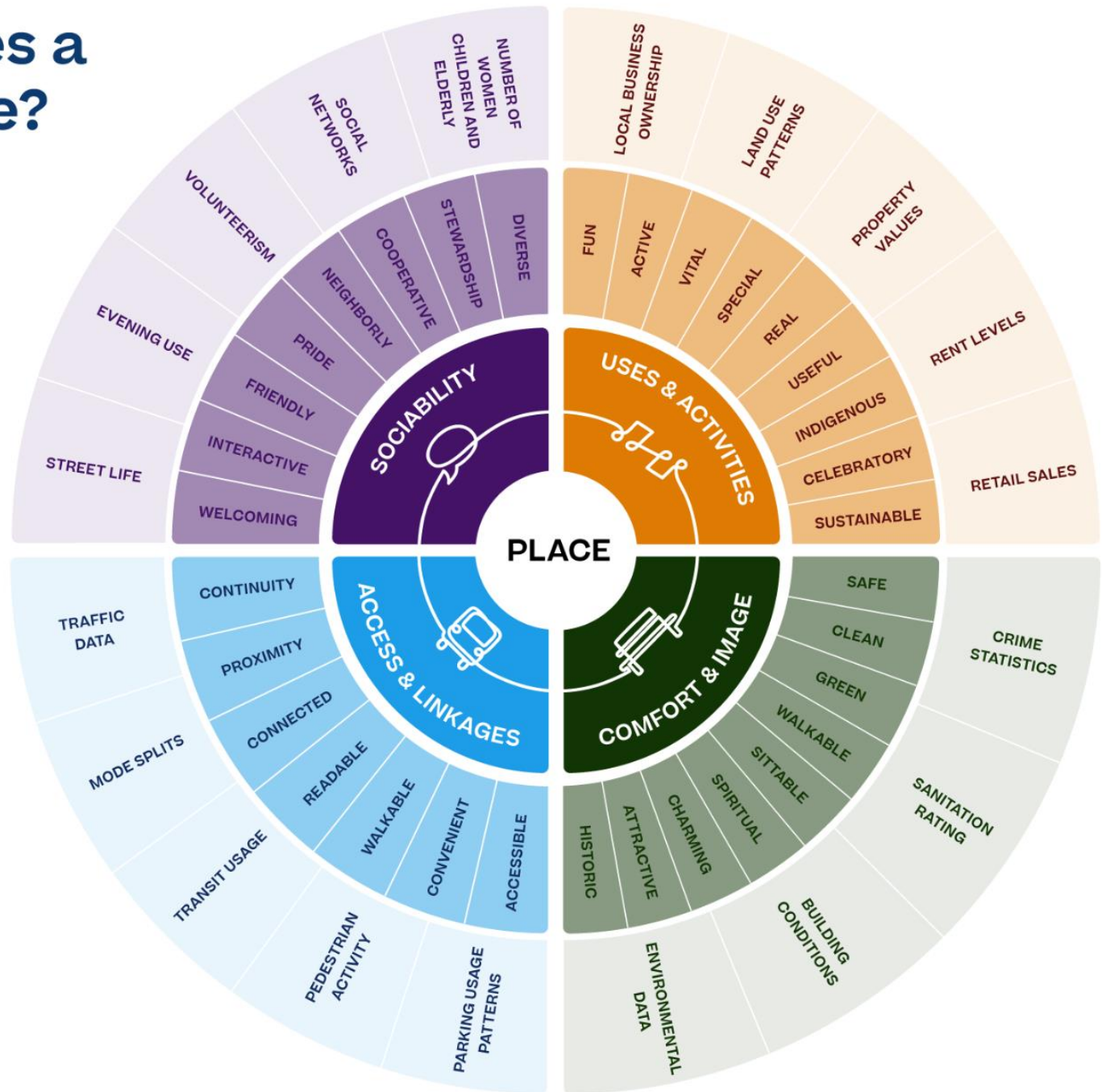
Open Saturday
Noon to 4 pm

Housing Types

- What we heard in Bear Lake:
 - Duplexes are okay if they match local designs
 - McMansions are out
 - Overly modern designs are out
 - No huge apartment complexes
 - Dense development is good if it has traditional design elements
- Does this hold true for your community?



What Makes a Great Place?



Project
for Public
Spaces





Thought Experiment

- Think of your favorite place you've ever been:
 - What spatial elements make it your favorite place?
 - What words would you use to describe the landscape?
 - What parts of that place could be integrated into Manistee?

Local Economy | Rural Context

- Challenges for rural economies

- Low population density
- Limited local demand
- Isolation from critical networks
- 'Wal-Mart economy
- Limited spaces/institutions for innovators
- Limited tech access

- Opportunities for rural economies

- Growth in demand for food production
- Demand for local/organic
- Low environmental impact
- Energy production
- Room to breathe/grow
- Connection to nature
- High community affect

Improving Civic Participation

- Private Sector | Public Sector
- What's in the middle?

Society



Community



Group



Dyad



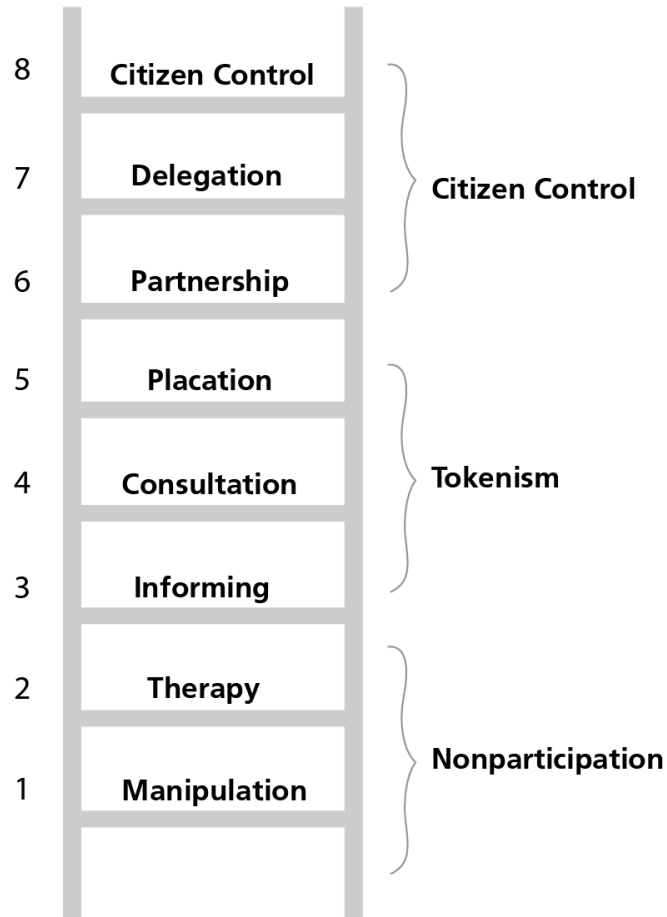
Deciding what to do – Ask the community

- Increases the likelihood that **projects or solutions will be supported**
- Creates **more effective solutions** by drawing on local knowledge of a diverse group of stakeholders
- **Improves citizens' knowledge** and skills in problem solving
- **Empowers and integrates** people from different backgrounds
- Creates **local networks** of community members
- Creates **opportunities for raising and discussing concerns.**
- **Increases trust** in community organizations and governance



Source: Bassler, Brasier, Fogle and Taverno (2008) 'Developing Effective Citizen Engagement: A How-to Guide for Community Leaders.' Center for Rural America, 2008. http://www.rural.palegislatore.us/Effective_Citizen_Engagement.pdf

Quality Public Input

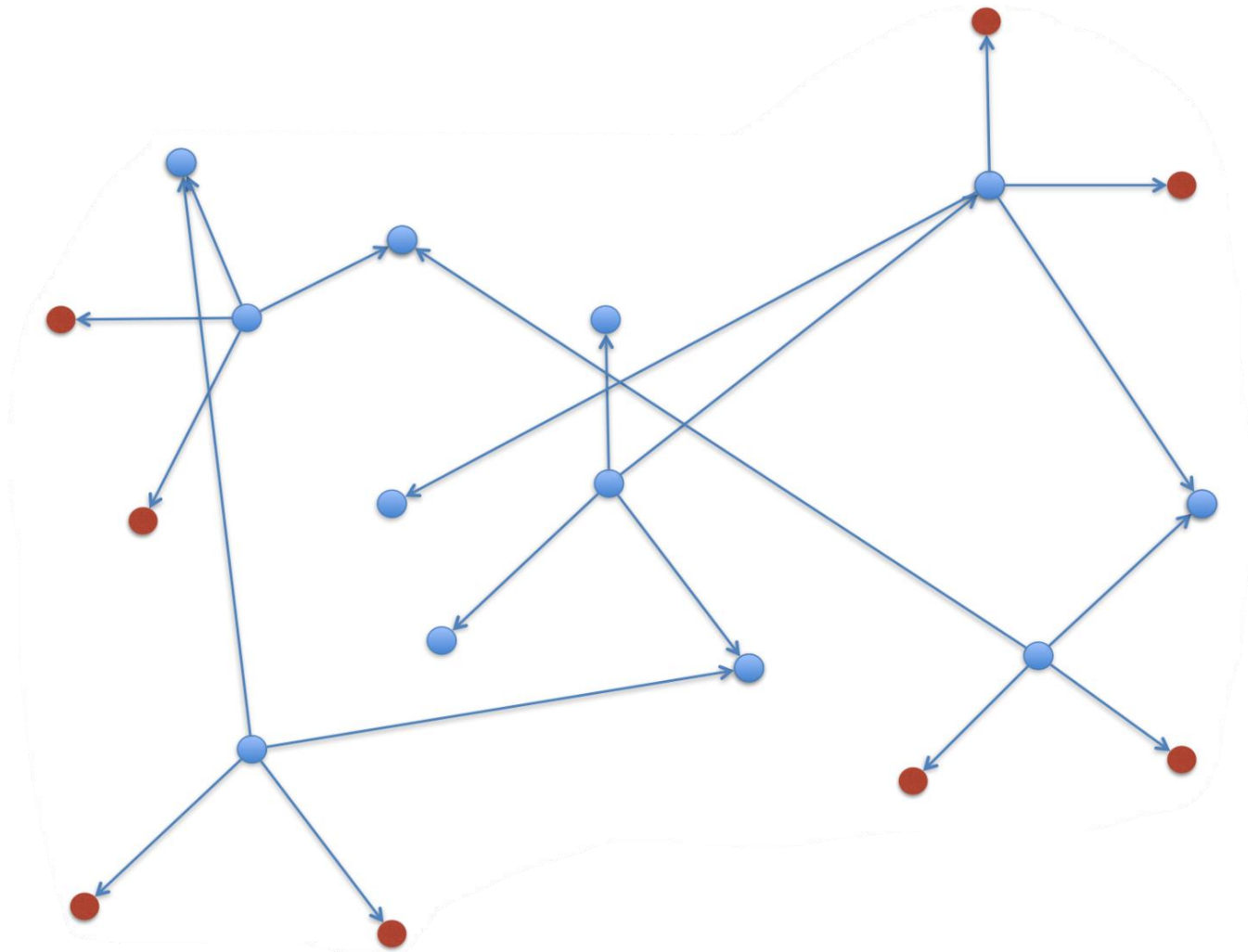


Arnstein's Ladder (1969)

Degrees of Citizen Participation



Social Networks – Making Connections



Question & Answer Session

Zach Vega, AICP

zach.vega@networksnorthwest.org

Visit networksnorthwest.org/community/about-us/ to learn more about
Networks Northwest's Community Development Team

